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A NEW EDITION, CORRECTED.

THE *ART* OF *PLEASING*;

OR,

INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUTH

In the first Stage of Life,

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS

To the present *EARL* OF *CHESTERFIELD*,

BY THE LATE

PHILIP EARL OF CHESTERFIELD.

Now first collected.

LONDON,

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PREFACE.

EDUCATION is an object ſo intereſting to individuals, and ſo important to the community at large, that too much attention cannot be paid to it. Every ſituation in life, every age, and every perſon connected in ſociety, are called upon, in ſome manner, and at ſome period, to regard that moſt indiſpenſable duty, upon which depends ſo much of the happineſs of the preſent age; ſo entirely the welfare of the riſing generation.

Of thoſe to whom the world is obliged for diſpenſing uſeful knowledge on this momentous ſubject, no one

can claim more regard than the noble writer of the following letters. His knowledge of the human heart, his patriotiſm, his philanthrophy, and his politeneſs, have long ago laid the public under obligations to his memory, which even a few exceptionable paſſages in his correſpondence with his ſon cannot diſcharge, and which entitle him to the rank and diſtinction uſually paid to thoſe who have been laudably employed in the ſervice of mankind.

The preſent letters require no evidence to aſcertain their authenticity. Every ſentiment, and every line, exhibit marks of that pen which ſo long was devoted to the entertainment and inſtruction of the public. They were written at a late period of the noble author's life, when it ſeems probable he had remarked ſome miſtakes in the ſyſtem of education which he had adopted for his ſon. Certain it is, whatever errors may be pointed out

out in his earlier ſentiments on that ſubject, no ſuch exceptions can be made to his maturer thoughts, as delivered in this volume. His opinions are the reſult of prudence and obſervation, and they will carry conviction to every perſon who affords them the notice they ſo well deſerve.

Were any proofs of the authenticity of theſe letters neceſſary, beyond their internal evidence, they might be ſupplied from Dr. Maty's edition of Lord Chesterfield's Works. In a letter to Dr. Chevenix, Biſhop of Waterford, they are expreſsly alluded to. "My kinſman "Mr. Stanhope, of Mansfield, (ſays the noble Lord) "has married a niece "of Mr. Barnes of Derby, whom "you know. His ſon, whom I have ta-"ken and adopted, turns out prodi-"gioufly well, both as to parts and "learning, and gives me great a-"muſement and pleaſure *in ſuperin-"tending his education, and in ſome things*

"*in-*

"*inſtructing him myſelf*; in which I "flatter myſelf that I do ſome good, "conſidering his future rank and "fortune." * That no man was better qualified for the office he here declares himſelf to have undertaken, than Lord Cheſterfield was, the letters now collected will ſufficiently teſtify. They were chiefly written during the Earl's reſidence at Bath, and received by his pupil, who was then under the care of Dr. Dodd, that unfortunate and much to be lamented victim to diſſipation and extravagance, by whom they were copied, and, as is generally believed, tranſmitted to the preſs through the diſgraceful channel of a provincial magazine.

It having been ſuggeſted to the publiſher, that inſtructions ſo well adapted to general uſe, and ſo excellently calculated for the improvement of education,

* MATY's Edition of Lord CHESTERFIELD, quarto, vol. 2, p. 526.

ducation, deſerved a more general notice than they have hitherto received, he has been induced to collect them together, fully perſuaded that the more the knowledge of them is diffuſed, the more advantageous they will prove to the intereſts of ſociety, whoſe well-being ſo greatly depends on the right direction of youth in the firſt ſtage of life, while they are capable of receiving impreſſions favourable to the practiſe of thoſe virtues which dignify and adorn human nature.

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The TROJANS, ETHIOPIANS, EGYPTIANS, ASSYRIANS, MEDES, PERSIANS, GREEKS, and ROMANS.

THE

THE ART OF PLEASING.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS FROM THE *EARL* OF CHESTERFILD TO MASTER *STANHOPE.*

MY DEAR LITTLE BOY, *Bath,*

OUR correſpondence has hitherto been very deſultory and various. My letters have had little or no relation to each other; and I endeavoured to ſuit them to your age and paſſion for vanity. I conſidered you as a child, and trifled with you accordingly; and,

though I cannot yet look upon you as a man, I ſhall conſider you as being capable of ſome ſerious reflection. You are now above half a man; and, before your preſent age is doubled, you will be quite a man: Therefore, *Paulo majora canamus.*

You already know your religious and moral duties, which indeed are exceedingly ſimple and plain: the former conſiſts in fearing and loving your Creator, and in obſerving his laws, which he has written in every man's heart, and which your conſcience will always remind you of, if you give it but a fair hearing: The latter, I mean your moral duties, are fully contained in theſe few words,

words, *Do as you would be done by.* Your claſſical knowledge, others more able than myſelf will inſtruct you in. There remains, therefore, nothing in which I can be uſeful to you, except to communicate to your youth and inexperience what a long obſervation, and knowledge of the world, enables me to give you.

I ſhall then, for the future, write you a ſeries of letters, which I deſire you will read twice over, and keep by you, upon the *duty*, the *utility*, and the *means* of pleaſing, that is, of being what the French call *amiable*; an art, which muſt be owned, they poſſeſs almoſt excluſively: They have ſtudied it the moſt, and they

practice it the beſt. I ſhall, therefore, often borrow their expreſſions in the following letters, as anſwering my ideas better than any I can find in my own language.

Remember this, and fix it in your mind, that whoever is not *amiable*, is in truth *no body at all*, with regard to the general intercourſe of life: his learning is pedantry, and even his virtue has no luſtre. Perhaps my ſubject may oblige me to ſay things above your preſent *forte*; but, in proportion as your underſtanding opens and extends itſelf, you will underſtand them; and then *Hæc olim meminiſſe juvabit.*

I pre-

I preſume you will not expect elegancy, or even accuracy, in letters of this kind, which I write ſingly for your uſe. I give you my matter juſt as it occurs to me. May it be uſeful to you.

P. S. If you were in this place, it would quite turn your little head; here would be ſo much of your dear vanity, that you would think rather leſs, if poſſible, than moſt of the company, who ſaunter away their whole time, and do nothing.

LETTER

LETTER II.

MY DEAR LITTLE BOY, *Bath,*

THE deſire of being pleaſed is univerſal; the deſire of pleaſing ſhould be ſo too. It is included in that great and fundamental principle of morality, of doing to others what one wiſhes they ſhould do to us. There are indeed ſome moral duties of a much higher nature, but none of a more amiable: and I do not heſitate to place it at the head of what Cicero calls the *leniores virtutes.*

The benevolent and feeling heart performs this duty with pleaſure, and in

in a manner that gives it at the ſame time; but the great, the rich, the powerful, too often beſtow their favours upon their inferiors, in the manner they beſtow their ſcraps upon their dogs; ſo as neither to oblige man nor dogs. It is no wonder if favours, benefits, and even charities thus beſtowed ungraciouſly, ſhould be as coldly and faintly acknowledged. Gratitude is a burden upon our imperfect nature; and we are but too willing to eaſe ourſelves of it, or at leaſt to lighten it as much as we can.

The *manner*, therefore, of conferring favours or benefits, is, as to pleaſing, almoſt as important as the matter

matter itſelf. Take care, then, never to throw away the obligations, which perhaps you may have it in your power to confer upon others, by an air of inſolent protection, or by a cold and comfortleſs manner, which ſtifles them in their birth. Humanity inclines, religion requires, and our moral duties oblige us, as far as we are able, to relieve the diſtreſſes and miſeries of our fellow-creatures; but this is not all; for a true heart-felt benevolence and tenderneſs, will prompt us to contribute what we can to their eaſe, their amuſement, and their pleaſure, as far as innocently we may. Let us then not only ſcatter benefits, but evrn ſtrew flowers for our fellow-travellers, in the rug-

rugged ways of this wretched world.

There are ſome, and but too many in this country particularly, who, without the leaſt viſible taint of ill-nature or malevolence, ſeem to be totally indifferent, and do not ſhew the leaſt deſire to pleaſe; as, on the other hand, they never deſignedly offend. Whether this proceeds from a lazy, negligent, and liſtleſs diſpoſition, from a gloomy and melancholy nature, from ill health, low ſpirits, or from a ſecret and ſullen pride, ariſing from the conſciouſneſs of their boaſted liberty and independency, is hard to determine, conſidering the various movements of the human heart, and

the wonderful errors of the human head. But, be the caſe what it will, that neutrality, which is the effect of it, makes theſe people, as neutralities do, deſpicable, and mere blanks in ſociety. They would ſurely be rouſed from their indifference, if they would ſerionſly conſider the infinite *utility of pleaſing*, which I ſhall do in my next.

LETTER

LETTER III.

MY DEAR LITTLE BOY, *Bath,*

AS the utility of pleaſing ſeems to be almoſt a ſelf-evident propoſition, I ſhall rather hint it to you, than dwell upon it. The perſon who manifeſts a conſtant deſire to pleaſe, places his, perhaps, ſmall ſtock of merit, at great intereſt. What vaſt returns, then, muſt real merit, when thus adorned, neceſſarily bring in? A prudent uſurer would with tranſport place his laſt ſhilling at ſuch intereſt, and upon ſo ſolid a ſecurity.

The man who is amiable, will make almoſt as many friends as he does acquaintances. I mean in the current acceptation of the word, but not ſuch ſentimental friends as Pylades or Oreſtes, Nyſus and Euryalus, &c. but he will make people in general wiſh him well, and inclined to ſerve him in any thing not inconſiſtent with their own intereſt.

Civility is the eſſential article towards pleaſing, and is the reſult of good nature and of good ſenſe; but good breeding is the decoration, the luſtre of civility, and only to be acquired by a minute attention to, and experience of good company. A good-

good-natured ploughman or fox-hunter, may be intentionally as civil as the politeſt courtier; but their manner often degrades and vilifies their matter; whereas, in good breeding, the *manner* always adorns and dignifies the *matter* to ſuch a degree, that I have known it to give currency to baſe coin. We may truly ſay, in this caſe, *materiem ſuperat opus.*

Civility is often attended by a ceremonioufneſs, which good breeding corrects, but will not quite aboliſh. A certain degree of ceremony is a neceſſary outwork of manners, as well as of religion: it keeps the forward and petulant at a proper diſtance, and is a very ſmall reſtraint to the ſenſible, and to the well-bred part of the

the world. We find in the Tale of a Tub, that *Peter* had too much pomp and ceremony, *Jack* too little; but *Martin*'s conduct ſeems to be a good rule for both worſhip and manners; and good ſenſe and good breeding purſue this true medium. In my next, I ſhall conſider the *means* of pleaſing.

P. S. I am ſorry I can ſend you no veniſon this year; but I have no doe-veniſon this time, the ſeaſon has been ſo unfavourable. You muſt celebrate your natal day this year without it, which you will do beſt by reflecting that you are now ten years old, and that you have no time to loſe in trifling childiſh diſſipation. You muſt apply now, or never.

LET-

LETTER IV.

MY DEAR LITTLE BOY, *Bath,*

THE means of pleaſing vary according to time, place, and perſon; but the general rule is the trite one, Endeavour to pleaſe, and you will infallibly pleaſe to a certain degree; conſtantly ſhew a deſire to pleaſe, and you will engage people's ſelf-love in your intereſt; a moſt powerful advocate. This, as indeed almoſt every thing elſe, depends on attention, or more properly *les attentions:* Be, therefore, minutely attentive to the circumſtances of time, place, and perſon, or you may happen to of-

fend,

fend, where you intend to pleaſe; for people, in what touches themſelves, make no allowances for ſlips or inadvertencies.

To be *diſtrait* in company is unpardonable, and implies a contempt for it, and is not leſs ridiculous than offenſive. There is little difference between a dead man, and a *diſtrait*; what difference there is, is entirely to the advantage of the former, whoſe inſenſibility every body ſees is not voluntary. Some people moſt abſurdly, affect diſtraction, as thinking that it implies deep thought and ſuperior wiſdom; but they are greatly miſtaken, for every body knows, that, if natural, it is a great weakneſs of

of the mind, and an egregious folly affected. A wiſe man, inſtead of not uſing the ſenſes which he has, would wiſh them all to be multiplied, in order to ſee and hear, at once, whatever is ſaid or done in company.

Be you then attentive to the moſt trifling thing that paſſes where you are; have, as the vulgar phraſe is, your eyes and your ears always about you. It is a very fooliſh, though a very common ſaying, "I really did not mind it;" or, "I was thinking of quite another thing at that time." The proper anſwer to ſuch ingenious excuſes, and which admits of no reply, is, why did you not mind it;

you was preſent when it was ſaid or done? Oh! but you may ſay, you was thinking of quite another thing; if ſo, why was you not in quite another place proper for that important other thing, which you ſay you was thinking of? But, you will ſay, perhaps, that the company was ſo ſilly, that it did not deſerve your attention: That, I am ſure, is the ſaying of a ſilly man; for a man of ſenſe knows that there is no company ſo ſilly, that ſome uſe may not be made of by attention.

You ſhould have (and it is to be had, if you pleaſe) a verſability in attention, which you may inſtantaneouſly

ouſly apply to different objects and perſons as they occur. Remember, that, without theſe *attentions*, you will never be fit to live in good company, nor indeed in any company at all; and the beſt thing you can do will be to turn *Chartreux*. When you preſent yourſelf, or are preſented for the firſt time in company, ſtudy to make the firſt impreſſion you give of yourſelf as advantageous as poſſible. This you can only do, at firſt, by what ſolid people commonly call trifles, which are *air*, *dreſs*, and *addreſs*. Here invoke the aſſiſtance of the Graces: even that ſilly article of dreſs is no trifle upon theſe occaſions.

Never be the firſt nor the laſt in the faſhion. Wear as fine cloaths as men of your rank commonly do, and rather better than worſe; and when you are well dreſſed once a day, do not ſeem to know that you have any cloaths on at all, but let your motions be as eaſy as they could be in your night gown. A fop values himſelf upon his dreſs: but a man of ſenſe will not neglect it, in his youth at leaſt. The greateſt fop I ever ſaw, was at the ſame time the greateſt ſloven: for it is an affected ſingularity of dreſs, be it of what ſort it will, that conſtitutes a fop, and every body will prefer an over-dreſſed fop to a ſlovenly one. Let your addreſs, when

you

you firſt come into company, be modeſt, but without the leaſt baſhfulneſs or ſheepiſhneſs; ſteady, without impudence; and unembarraſſed, as if you were in your own room. This is a difficult point to hit, and therefore deſerves great attention; nothing but a long uſage in the world, and in the beſt company, can poſſibly give it.

A young man without knowledge of the world, when he firſt goes into a faſhionable company, where moſt are his ſuperiors, is commonly either annihilated by *mauvaiſe honte*, or, if he rouſes and laſhes himſelf up to what he only thinks a modeſt aſſurance,

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ance, he runs into impudence and abſurdity, and conſequently offends, inſtead of pleaſing. Have always, as much as you can, that *air de douceur*, which never fails to make favourable impreſſions, provided it be equally free from an inſipid ſmile, or a pert ſmirk.

LETTER V.

MY DEAR LITTLE BOY, *Bath.*

CAREFULLY avoid an argumentative, and diſputative turn, which too many people have, and ſome even value themſelves upon, in company; and when your opinion differs from others, maintain it only with modeſty, calmneſs, and gentleneſs; but never be eager, loud, or clamourous; and, when you find your antagoniſt beginning to grow warm, put an end to the diſpute by ſome genteel *badinage*. For, take it for granted, if the two beſt friends in the world diſpute about the moſt trifling ſubject imaginable, they will, for the time, find a mo

a momentary alienation from each other. Diſputes upon each ſubject, are a ſort of trial of the underſtanding, and muſt end in the mortification of one or other of the diſputants. On the other hand, I am far from meaning that you ſhould give an univerſal aſſent to all that you hear ſaid in company; ſuch an aſſent would be mean, and in ſome caſes criminal; but blame with indulgence, and correct with *douceur*.

It is impoſſible for a man of ſenſe not to have a contempt for fools, and for a man of honour not to have an abhorrence of knaves; but you muſt gain upon yourſelf, ſo as not

not to diſcover either in their full extent. They are, I fear, too great a majority to contend with, and their number makes them formidable, tho' not reſpectable. They commonly hang together, for the mutual uſe they make of each other. Shew them a reſerved civility, and let them not exiſt with regard to you. Do not play off the fool, as is too commonly done by would-be wits, nor ſhock the knave unneceſſarily, but have as little as poſſible to do with either; and remember always, that whoever contracts a friendſhip with a knave or a fool, has ſomething bad to do or to conceal. A young man, eſpecially at his firſt entering into the

world, is generally judged of by the company he keeps; and it is a very fair way of judging: and tho' you will not, at firſt, be able to make your way, perhaps, into the beſt company, it is always in your power to avoid bad. It may be that you will aſk me, how I define *good* and *bad* company? and I will do it as well as I can; for it is of the greateſt importance to know the difference.

Good company conſiſts of a number of people of a certain faſhion, (I do not mean birth,) of whom the majority are reckoned to be people of ſenſe, and of decent characters; in ſhort, of thoſe who are allowed univer-

ſally

ſally to be, and are called good company. It is poſſible, nay probable, that a fool or two may ſneak, or a knave or two intrude into ſuch a company: the former, in hopes of getting the reputation of a little common ſenſe, and the latter, that of ſome common honeſty. But, *ubi plura nitent*, like Horace, you muſt not be offended *paucis maculis*.

Bad company is, whatever is not generally allowed to be good company; but there are ſeveral gradations in this as in the other, and it will be impoſſible for you, in the common courſe of life, not to fall ſometimes into bad company; but get out of it

as ſoon, and as well as you can. There are ſome companies ſo blaſted and ſcandalous, that to have been with them twice, would hurt your character both as to virtue and parts; ſuch is the company of bullies, ſharpers, jockies, and low debauchees either in wine or women, not to mention fools. On the other hand, do not, while young, declaim and preach againſt them like a Capuchin: you are not called upon to be a repairer of wrongs, or a reformer of manners. Let your own be pure, and leave others to the contempt or indignation they deſerve.

There is a third ſort of company, which, without being ſcandalous, is vilifying

vilifying and degrading; I mean, what is called *low* company, which young men of birth and faſhion, at their firſt appearance in the world are too apt to like from a degree of baſhfulneſs, *mauvaiſe honte*, and lazineſs, which is not eaſily rubbed off. If you ſink into this ſort of company but for one year, you will never emerge from it, but remain as obſcure and inſignificant as they are themſelves. Vanity is alſo a great inducement to keep low company; for a man of quality is ſure to be the firſt man in it, and to be admired and flattered, though, perhaps, the greateſt fool in it. Do not think I mean, by low company, people of no birth; for

birth

birth goes for nothing with me, nor, I hope, with you; but I mean, by low company, obſcure, inſignificant people, unknown, and unſeen in the polite part of the world, and diſtinguiſhed by no one particular merit or talent, unleſs, perhaps, by ſoaking and ſitting out their evenings; for drinking is generally the dull and indecent occupation of ſuch company.

There is another ſort of company which I wiſh you to avoid in general, though now and then, (but ſeldom), there may be no harm in ſeeing it; I mean the company of wags, witlings, buffoons, mimicks, and merry fellows, who are all of them commonly the dulleſt fellows in the world, with the ſtrongeſt

ſtrongeſt animal ſpirits. If from mere curioſity you go into ſuch company, do not wear in it a ſevere, philoſophical face of contempt of their illiberal mirth, but content yourſelf with acting a very inferior part in it; contract no familiarity with any of the performers, which would give them claims upon you that you could not with decency either ſatisfy or reject: call none of them by their Chriſtian names, as Jack, Frank, &c. but rather uſe a more ceremonious civility with them than with your equals; for nothing keeps forward and petulant puppies at a proper diſtance ſo effectually as a little ceremony.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

MY DEAR LITTLE BOY. *Bath.*

BAD company is much eaſier defined than good; what is bad, muſt ſtrike every body at firſt ſight; folly, knavery, and profligacy, can never be miſtaken for wit, honour, and decency. Bad company have * * * *; but in good, there are ſeveral gradations from good to the beſt; merely, good, is rather free from objections than deſerving of praiſe. Aim at the beſt; but what is the beſt? I take it to be thoſe ſocieties of men or women, or a mixture of both, where great polite-

politeneſs, good-breeding, and decency, though, perhaps, not always virtue, prevail.

Women of faſhion and character, I do not mean abſolutely unblemiſhed, are a neceſſary ingredient in the compoſition of good company; the *attention* which they require, and which is always paid them by well-bred men, keeps up politeneſs, and gives a habit of good-breeding; whereas men, when they live together without the lenitive of women in company, are apt to grow careleſs, negligent, and rough, among one another. In company, every woman is every man's ſuperior, and muſt be addreſſed with reſpect, nay more, with flattery, and you

need not fear making it too ſtrong; ſuch flattery is not mean in your part, nor pernicious to them; for it can never give them a greater opinion of their beauty or their ſenſe than they had before: Therefore make the doſe ſtrong: it will be greedily ſwallowed.

Women ſtamp the character, faſhionable or unfaſhionable, of all young men at their firſt appearance in the world. Bribe them with minute attentions, good-breeding, and flattery: I have often known their proclamation give a value and currency to baſe coin enough, and, conſequently, it will add a luſtre to the trueſt ſterling. Women, though otherwiſe called ſenſible, have all of them, more or leſs weak-

weakneſs, ſingularities, whims, and humours, eſpecially vanity; ſtudy attentively all their failings, gratify them as far as you can, nay, flatter them, and ſacrifice your own little humours for them. Young men are too apt to ſhew a diſlike, not to ſay an averſion and contempt, for old, and ugly women; which is both impolite and injudicious; for there is a reſpectful politeneſs due to the whole ſex. Beſides, the ugly and the old, having the leaſt to do themſelves, are jealous of being deſpiſed, and never forgive it; and I could ſuppoſe caſes, in which you would deſire their friendſhip, or at leaſt their neutrality. Let it be a rule with you never to ſhew that contempt which very often you will have,

and with reaſon, for a human creature; for it will never be forgiven. An injury is ſooner pardoned than an inſult.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

MY DEAR LITTLE BOY, *Bath.*

IF you have not command enough over yourſelf to conquer your humours, as I hope you will, and as I am ſure every rational creature may have, never to go into company while the fit of ill-humour is upon you. Inſtead of company's diverting you in thoſe moments, you will diſpleaſe, and probably ſhock them; and you will part worſe friends than you met: But whenever you find in yourſelf a diſpoſition to ſullenneſs, contradiction, or teſtineſs, it will be in vain to ſeek

ſeek for a cure abroad. Stay at home, let your humour ferment and work itſelf off. Chearfulneſs and good humour are of all qualifications the moſt amiable in company; for, though they do not neceſſarily imply good-nature and good breeding, they act them at leaſt very well, and that is all that is required in mixt company.

I have indeed known ſome very ill-natured people, who were very good-humoured in company; but I never knew any body generally ill-humoured in company, who was not eſſentially ill-natured. When there is no malevolence in the heart, there is always a chearfulneſs and eaſe in the countenance

nance and manners. By good humour and chearfulneſs, I am far from meaning noiſy mirth and loud peals of laughter, which are the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtics of the vulgar and of the ill bred, whoſe mirth is a kind of a ſtorm. Obſerve it, the vulgar often laugh, but never ſmile; whereas, well bred people often ſmile, but ſeldom laugh. A witty thing never excited laughter; it pleaſes only the mind, and never diſtorts the countenance: a glaring abſurdity, a blunder, a ſilly accident, and thoſe things that are generally called comical, may excite a laugh, though never a loud nor a long one, among well bred people.

Sudden

Sudden paſſion is called ſhort-lived madneſs; it is a madneſs indeed, but the fits return ſo often in choleric people, that it may well be called a continual madneſs. Should you happen to be of this unfortunate diſpoſition, which God forbid, make it your conſtant ſtudy to ſubdue, or, at leaſt, to check it: when you find your choler riſing, reſolve neither to ſpeak to, nor anſwer the perſon who excites it; but ſtay till you find it ſubſiding, and then ſpeak deliberately. I have known many people, who, by the rapidity of their ſpeech, have run away with themſelves into a paſſion. I will mention to you a trifling, and, perhaps, you will think a ridiculous receipt, towards

towards checking the exceſs of paſſion, of which I think that I have experienced the utility myſelf. Do every thing in a minuet-time; ſpeak, think, and move always in that meaſure, equally free from the dulneſs of ſlow, or the hurry or huddle of quick time. This movement will moreover allow you ſome moments to think forwards, and the Graces to accompany what you ſay or do; for they are never repreſented as either running or dozing. Obſerve a man in a paſſion, ſee his eyes glaring, his face inflamed, his limbs trembling, and his tongue ſtammering and faultering with rage, and then aſk yourſelf calmly, whether upon any account you would be that

human wild beaſt. Such creatures are hated and dreaded in all companies, where they are let looſe, as people do not chuſe to be expoſed to the diſagreeable neceſſity of either knocking down thoſe brutes, or being knocked down by them. Do you on the contrary, endeavour to be cool and ſteady upon all occaſions; the advantages of ſuch a ſteady calmneſs are innumerable, and would be too tedious to relate. It may be acquired by care and reflection; if it could not, that reaſon which diſtinguiſhes men from brutes, would be given us to very little purpoſe: As a proof of this, I never ſaw, and ſcarcely ever heard of a quaker in a paſſion. In truth, there is, in that ſect, a decorum, and decency,

and

and an amiable ſimplicity, that I know in no other.

Having mentioned the Graces in this letter, I cannot end it, without recommending to you, moſt earneſtly, the advice of the wiſeſt of the antients, to ſacrifice to them devoutly and daily: when they are propitious, they adorn every thing, and engage every body. But are they to be acquired? Yes, to a certain degree, by attention, and obſervation, and aſſiduous worſhip. Nature, I admit, muſt firſt have made you capaple of adopting them, and then obſervation and imitation will make them, in time, your own.

There are graces of the mind, as well as of the body; the former give an engaging turn to the thoughts and the expreſſions: the latter to the motions, attitudes, and addreſs. No man perhaps ever poſſeſſed them all. He would be too happy that did. But, if you will attentively obſerve thoſe graceful and engaging manners which pleaſe you moſt in other people, you may eaſily correct what will pleaſe others in you, and engage the *majority* of the graces on your ſide; inſure the caſting vote, and be returned *amiable*. There are people whom the *Precieuſe* of Moliere very juſtly, though very affectedly, calls *les antipodes des graces*; if theſe unhappy people

ple are formed by Nature invincibly *mauſſades* and awkward, they are to be pitied rather than blamed or ridiculed. But Nature has diſinherited few people to that degree.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

MY DEAR LITTLE BOY, *Bath.*

IF God give you wit, which I am not ſure that I wiſh you, unleſs he gives you at the ſame time at leaſt an equal portion of judgment, to keep it in good order, wear it like your ſword in the ſcabbard, and do not brandiſh it to the terror of the whole company. If you have real wit, it will flow ſpontaneouſly, and you need not aim at it; for, in that caſe, the rule of the goſpel is reverſed; and it will prove, *ſeek*, and you ſhall not find. Wit is a ſhining quality, that every body

body admires; moſt people aim at it, all people fear it, and few love it, unleſs in themſelves. A man muſt have a good ſhare of wit himſelf to endure a great ſhare in another. When wit exerts itſelf in ſatire, it is a moſt malignant diſtemper; wit, it is true, may be ſhown in ſatire; but ſatire does not conſtitute wit, as many imagine. A man of wit ought to find a thouſand better occaſions of ſhowing it.

Abſtain, therefore, moſt carefully from ſatire, which, though it fall on no particular perſon in company, and momentarily, from the malignancy of the human heart, pleaſes all; yet, upon reflection, it frightens all to. E-

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very one thinks it may be his turn next, and will hate you for what he finds you could ſay of him, more than be obliged to you for what you do not ſay. Fear and hatred are next door neighbours; the more wit you have, the more good nature and politeneſs you muſt ſhow, to induce people to pardon your ſuperiority; for that is no eaſy matter. Learn to ſhrink yourſelf to the ſize of the company you are in. Take their tone, whatever it may be, and excel in it, if you can, but never pretend to give the tone. A fine converſation will no more bear a dictator, than a free government will.

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The character of a man of wit is a ſhining one, that every man would have, if he could, though it is often attended with ſome inconveniences: The dulleſt alderman ever aims at it; cracks his dull joke, and thinks, or at leaſt hopes, that it is wit; but the denomination is always formidable, and very often ridiculous. The *titular wits* have commonly much leſs wit than petulance and preſumption: They are at beſt the *Riuers de leur quartier*, in which narrow ſphere they are at once feared, and admired.

You will perhaps aſk me, and juſtly, how, conſidering the deluſion of ſelf-love and vanity, from which no

man living is abſolutely free, how you ſhall know whether you have wit or not? To which the beſt anſwer I can give you is, not to truſt to the voice of your own judgment, for it will deceive you, nor to your ears, which will always greedily receive flattery, if you are worth being flattered; but truſt only to your eyes, and read in the countenances of good company their approbation or diſlike of what you ſay. Obſerve carefully too, whether you are ſought for, ſolicited, and in a manner preſſed into good company. But even all this will not abſolutely aſcertain your wit: therefore do not, upon this encouragement, flaſh your wit in people's faces *a ricochets*, in the ſhape of *bons mots*, epigrams, or ſmart repartees.

Ap-

Appear to have rather leſs than more wit than you really have. A wiſe man will live at leaſt as much within his wit as his income. Content yourſelf with good ſenſe and reaſon, which at the long-run are ever ſure to pleaſe every body who has either; if wit comes in the bargain, welcome it, but never invite it. Bear this truth always in your mind, that you may be admired for your wit, if you have any; but that nothing but good ſenſe and good qualities can make you be beloved: they are ſubſtantial every day's wear. Wit is for *le jour de gala*, where people go chiefly to be ſtared at.

P. S. I received your laſt letter, which is very well written. I ſhall ſee you next week, and bring you ſome pretty things from hence; becauſe I am told you are a very good boy, and have learned very well.

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LETTER IX.

MY DEAR LITTLE BOY, *Bath.*

THERE is a ſpecies of minor wit, which is much uſed, and much more abuſed; I mean raillery. It is a moſt miſchievous and dangerous weapon, when in unſkilful or clumſy hands; and it is much ſafer to let it quite alone, than to play with it; and yet almoſt every body do play with it, though they ſee the daily quarrels and heart-burnings it occaſions. In truth, it implies a ſuppoſed ſuperiority in the *raillure* to the *raillé*, which no man likes even the ſuſpicion of, in his own

own caſe, though it may divert him in other people.

An innocent *raillerie* is often inoffenſively begun, but very ſeldom inoffenſively ended, for that depends upon the *raillé*, who, if he cannot defend himſelf, will grow brutal; and, if he can, very poſſibly his *railleur*, baffled, becomes ſo. It is a ſort of trial of wit, in which no man can bear to have his inferiority made appear.

The character of a *railleur* is more generally feared, and more heartily hated than any one. I know that in the world, the injuſtice of a bad man is ſooner forgiven, than the inſults

ſults of a witty one; the former only hurts one's liberty and property, but the latter hurts and mortifies that ſecret pride, which no man's breaſt is free from. I will allow that there is a ſort of raillery, which may not only be inoffenſive, but even flattering, as when, by a genteel irony, you accuſe people of thoſe imperfections, which they are moſt notoriouſly free from, and, conſequently, inſinuate, that they poſſeſs the contrary virtues. You may ſafely call Ariſtides a knave, or a very handſome woman an ugly one. Take care, however, that neither the man's character, nor the lady's beauty be in the leaſt doubtful. But this ſort of raillery requires a very light and ſteady hand to adminiſter it. A little

too

too ſtrong, it may be miſtaken into an offence, and a little too ſmooth, it may be thought a ſneer, which is the moſt odious thing.

There is another ſort, I will not call it wit, but merriment and buffoonry, which is *mimicry*. The moſt ſucceſsful mimic in the world is always the moſt abſurd fellow, and an ape is infinitely his ſuperior. His profeſſion is to imitate and ridicule thoſe natural defects and deformities, for which no man is in the leaſt accountable, and in the imitation of which, he makes himſelf, for the time, as diſagreeable and ſhocking, as thoſe he mimics. But I will ſay no more of thoſe creatures who

who only amuſe the loweſt rabble of mankind.

There is another ſort of human animals, called Wags, whoſe profeſſion is to make the company laugh immoderately, and who always ſucceed, provided the company conſiſt of fools; but who are equally diſappointed in finding that they never can alter a muſcle in the face of a man of ſenſe. This is a moſt contemptible character, and never eſteemed even by thoſe who are ſilly enough to be diverted by them.

Be content for yourſelf with ſound good ſenſe, and good manners, and let wit be thrown into the bargain,

where it is proper and inoffenſive. Good ſenſe will make you be eſteemed; good manners, beloved; wit gives a luſtre to both. In whatever company you happen to be, whatever pleaſures you are engaged in, though perhaps not of a very laudable kind, take care to preſerve a great perſonal dignity; I do not in the leaſt mean a pride of birth and rank, that would be too ſilly; but I mean a dignity of character. Let your moral character of honeſty and honour be unblemiſhed, and even unſuſpected. I have known ſome people dignify even their vices; firſt, by never boaſting of them; and, next, by not practiſing them in an illiberal and indecent manner. If they were addicted to women, they never de-

degraded and dirtied themſelves in the company of infamous proſtitutes; if they loved drinking too well, they did not practiſe that beaſtly vice in beaſtly companies; but with thoſe whoſe good humour in ſome degree ſeemed to excuſe it, though nothing can juſtify it. When you ſee a drunken man, as probably you will ſee many, ſtudy him with attention, and aſk yourſelf ſoberly, whether you would, upon any account, be that beaſt, that diſgrace to human reaſon. The Lacedemonians very wiſely made their ſlaves drunk, to deter their children from being ſo; and with good effect, for nobody ever yet heard of a Lacedemonian drunk.

LETTER X.

MY DEAR LITTLE BOY, *Bath.*

IF there is a lawful and proper object of raillery, it ſeems to be a coxcomb, as an uſurper of the common rights of mankind: but here ſome precautions are neceſſary. Some wit, and great preſumption, conſtitutes a coxcomb; for a true coxcomb muſt have wit. The moſt conſummate coxcomb I ever knew, was a man of the moſt wit, but whoſe wit, boaſted with preſumption, made him too big for any company, where he always uſurped the ſeat of empire, and crowded out common ſenſe.

Rail-

Raillery ſeems to be a proper rod for theſe offenders; but great caution and ſkill are neceſſary in the uſe of it, or you may happen to catch a Tartar, as they call it, and then the laughter will be againſt you. The beſt way with theſe people is to let them quite alone, and give them rope enough.

On the other hand, there are many, and perhaps more, who ſuffer from their timidity, and *mauvaiſe honte*, which ſink them infinitely below their level. Timidity is generally taken for ſtupidity, which, for the moſt part, it is not, but proceeds from a want of education in good company. Mr. Ad-

Addiſon was the moſt timid and aukward man I ever ſaw; and no wonder, for he had been wholly cloiſtered up in the cells of Oxford till he was five-and-twenty years old. La Bruyere ſays, and there is a great deal of truth in it, *Qu'on ne vaut dans ce monde que ce que l'on veut valoir*; for in this reſpect, mankind ſhew great indulgence, and value people at pretty near the price they ſet on themſelves, if it be not exorbitant.

I could wiſh you to have a cool, intrepid aſſurance, with great ſeeming modeſty, never *demonte*, and never forward. Very aukward, timid people, who have not been uſed to keep good company, are either ridiculouſly baſhful,

baſhful, or abſurdly impudent. I have known many a man impudent from ſhamefacedneſs, endeavouring to act a reaſonable aſſurance, and laſhing himſelf to what he imagined to be a proper and eaſy behaviour. A very timid, baſhful man is annihilated in good company, eſpecially of his ſuperiors; he does not know what he ſays or does; and it is a ridiculous agitation, both of body and mind. Avoid both extremes, and endeavour to poſſeſs yourſelf with coolneſs and ſteadineſs: Speak to the king with full as little concern, though with more reſpect, as you would to your equals. This is the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of a gentleman, and a man of the world.

The way to acquire this moſt neceſſary behaviour, is, as I have told you before, to keep company, whatever difficulty it may coſt you at firſt, with your ſuperiors, and with women of faſhion, inſtead of taking refuge, as too many young people do, in low or bad company, in order to avoid the reſtraint of good breeding. It is, I confeſs, a very difficult, not to ſay an impoſſible thing, for a young man, at his firſt appearance in the world, and unuſed to the ways and manners of it, not to be diſconcerted and embarraſſed, when he firſt enters what is called the beſt company. He ſees that they ſtare at him, and if they happen to laugh, he is ſure that they laugh at him. This aukwardneſs is

not

not to be blamed, as it often proceeds from laudable cauſes, from a modeſt diffidence of himſelf, and a conſciouſneſs of not yet knowing the modes and manners of good company. But let him perſevere with a becoming modeſty, and he will find that all people of good nature and good breeding, will, at firſt, help him out, inſtead of laughing at him; and then a very little uſage of the world, and attentive obſervation, will ſoon give him a proper knowledge of it.

It is the characteriſtic of low and bad company, which commonly conſiſt of wags and witlings, to laugh and diſconcert, and, as they call it, bamboozle a young fellow of inge-

nuous modeſty. You will tell me, perhaps, that, to do all this, one muſt have a good ſhare of vanity: I grant it; but the great point is, *Ne quid nimis*; for I fear Monſieur Rochefaucault's maxim is to too true, *Que la vertue n'iroit pas loin, ſi la vanite ne lui tenoit compagnie.* A man, who deſpairs of pleaſing, will never pleaſe; a man that is ſure that he ſhall always pleaſe wherever he goes, is a coxcomb; but the man who hopes, and endeavours to pleaſe, will moſt infallibly pleaſe.

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LETTER XI.

MY DEAR LITTLE BOY, *Bath.*

THE egotiſm is the moſt uſual and favourite figure of moſt people's rhetoric, and which I hope you will never adopt, but, on the contrary, moſt ſcrupulouſly avoid. Nothing is more diſagreeable or irkſome to the company, than to hear a man either praiſing or condemning himſelf; for both proceed from the ſame motive, vanity. I would allow no man to ſpeak of himſelf, unleſs in a court of juſtice, in his own defence, or as a witneſs. Shall a man ſpeak in his own praiſe? No; the hero of his own little tale

always puzzles and diſguſts the company, who do not know what to ſay, or how to look. Shall he blame himſelf? No; vanity is as much the motive of his condemnation as his panegyric.

I have known many people take ſhame to themſelves, and with a modeſt contrition, confeſs themſelves guilty of the moſt cardinal virtues. They have ſuch a weakneſs in their nature, that they cannot help being too much moved with the misfortunes and miſeries of their fellow creatures, which they feel, perhaps, more, but, at leaſt, as much as they do their own. Their generoſity, they are ſenſible, is imprudence; for they are apt to carry it too far, from

from the weak, the irreſiſtible beneficence of their nature. They are poſſibly too jealous of their honour, too iraſcible when they think it is touched; and this proceeds from their unhappy, warm conſtitution, which makes them too ſenſible upon that point; and ſo on of all the virtues poſſible.—A poor trick, and a wretched inſtance of human vanity, and what defeats its own purpoſe.

Do you be ſure never to ſpeak *of* yourſelf *for* yourſelf, nor *againſt* yourſelf; but let your character ſpeak for you: Whatever *that* ſays will be believed; but whatever you ſay of it will not be believed, and only make you odious and ridiculous. Be conſtantly

ſtantly on your guard againſt the various ſnares and effects of vanity and ſelf-love; it is impoſſible to extinguiſh them; they are without exception in every human breaſt; and, in the preſent ſtate of nature, it is very right it ſhould be ſo. But endeavour to keep within the due bounds, which is very poſſible. In this caſe diſſimulation is meritorious, and the ſeeming modeſty of the hero or the patriot adorns their other virtues.

Vanity is the more odious and ſhocking to every body, becauſe every body without exception has vanity, and two vanities can never love one another, any more than, according to the vulgar ſaying, two of a trade can. If

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you desire to please men and women, address yourself to their passions and weaknesses; gain their hearts, and let their reason do its worst against you.

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LETTER XII.

MY DEAR LITTLE BOY, *Bath.*

I KNOW that you are generous and benevolent in your nature; but that, though the principal point, is not quite enough, you muſt ſeem ſo too. I do not mean oſtentatiouſly; but do not be aſhamed, as many young fellows are, of owning the laudable ſentiments of good nature and humanity which you really feel. I have known many young men who deſired to be reckoned men of ſpirit, affect a hardneſs and unfeelingneſs which in reality they never had; their converſation

ſation is in the deciſive and menacing tone; they are for breaking bones, throwing people out of the windows, cutting off ears; and all theſe fine declarations they ratify with horrid and ſilly oaths; all this to be thought men of ſpirit. Aſtoniſhing error this! which neceſſarily reduces them to this dilemma: If they really mean what they ſay, they are brutes, and if they do not, they are fools for ſaying it. This, however, is a common character among young men. Carefully avoid this contagion, and content yourſelf with being calmly and mildly reſolute and ſteady, when you are thoroughly convinced you are in the right; for this is true ſpirit. What is commonly called in the world a

man or a woman of ſpirit, are the two moſt deteſtable and moſt dangerous animals that inhabit it. They are wrong-headed, captious, jealous, offending without reaſon, and defending with as little. The man of ſpirit has immediate recourſe to his ſword, and the woman of ſpirit to her tongue; and it is hard to ſay which of the two is the moſt miſchievous weapon. It is too uſual a thing in many companies, to take the tone of ſcandal and defamation; ſome gratify their malice, and others think they ſhew their wit by it; but I hope you will never adopt this tone. On the contrary, do you always take the favorable ſide of the queſtion; and, without any offenſive and flat contradic-

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tion, ſeem to doubt, and repreſent the uncertainty of reports, where private malice is at leaſt very apt to mingle itſelf. This candid and temperate behaviour will pleaſe the whole candid company, though a ſort of gentle contradiction to their unfavourable inſinuations, as it makes them hope they may in their turn find an advocate in you.

There is another kind of offenſiveneſs often uſed in company; which is, to throw out hints, and inſinuations, only applicable to, and felt by one or two perſons in the company, who are conſequently both embarraſſed, and angry, and the more ſo, as they are unwilling to ſhew that they apply

thoſe hints to themſelves. Have a watch over yourſelf; never to ſay any thing that either the whole company, or any one perſon in it, can reaſonably or probably take ill; and remember the French ſaying, *Qu'il ne faut pas parler de corde dans la maiſon d'un pendu.* Good nature univerſally charms, even thoſe who have none; and it is impoſſible to be *amiable* without both the reality and appearance of it.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

MY DEAR LITTLE BOY, *Bath.*

I HAVE more than once recommended to you, in the courſe of our correſpondence, attention; but I ſhall frequently recur to that ſubject, which is as inexhauſtible as it is important. Attend carefully, in the firſt place, to human nature in general, which is pretty much the ſame in all human creatures, and varies chiefly by modes, habits, education, and example: analyſe, and, if I may uſe the expreſſion, ana-

anatomize it; ſtudy your own, and that will lead you to know other people's; carefully obſerve the words, the looks, and geſtures of the whole company you are in, and retain all their little ſingularities, humors, taſtes, affections, and antipathies, which will enable you to pleaſe or avoid them, occaſionally, as your judgment may direct you.

I will give you the moſt trifling inſtance of this that can be imagined, and yet will be ſure to pleaſe. If you invite any body to dinner, you ſhould take care to provide thoſe things which you have obſerved them to like more more particularly, and not to have thoſe things which you know they have

have an antipathy to. Theſe trifling things go a great way in the art of pleaſing, and the more ſo, from being ſo trifling, that they are flattering proofs of your regard to thoſe perſons. Theſe things are what the French call *des attentions*; which, to do them juſtice, they ſtudy and practiſe more than any people in Europe.

Attend to, and look at whoever ſpeaks to you, and never ſeem *diſtrait* or *reveur*, as if you did not hear them at all, for nothing is more contemptible, and conſequently more ſhocking. It is true, you will by this means often be obliged to attend to things not worth any body's attention; but it is a neceſſary ſacrifice to be made

to

to good manners in ſociety. A minute attention is alſo neceſſary to time, place, and character; a *bon mot* in one company is not ſo in another, but, on the contrary, may prove offenſive. Never joke with thoſe whom you obſerve to be at the time penſive and grave; and, on the other hand, do not preach and moralize in a company full of mirth and gaiety. Many people come into company full of what they intend to ſay in it themſelves, without the leaſt regard to others; and thus charged up to the muzzle, are reſolved to let it off at any rate. I knew a man who had a ſtory about a gun, which he thought a good one, and that he told it very well. He tried all means in the world

world to turn the converſation upon guns; but if he failed in his attempt, he ſtarted in his chair, and ſaid he heard a gun fired: but when the company aſſured him they heard no ſuch thing, he anſwered, perhaps then I was miſtaken; but, however, ſince we are talking of guns—and then told his ſtory, to the great indignation of the company.

Become, as far as with innocence and honour you can, all things to all men, and you will gain a great many friends. Have *des prevenances* too, and ſay or do what you judge before hand will be moſt agreeable to them, without their hinting at or expecting it. It would be endleſs to ſpe-

cify the numberleſs opportunities a man has of pleaſing, if he will but make uſe of them; your own good ſenſe will ſuggeſt them to you, and your good nature, and even your intereſt will induce you to practice them. Great attention is to be had to times and ſeaſons: for example, at meals talk often, but never long at a time; for the frivolous buſtle of ſervants, and often the more frivolous converſation of the gueſts, which chiefly turns upon kitchen ſtuff and cellar ſtuff, will not bear any long reaſonings or relations. Meals are and were always reckoned moments of relaxation of the mind, and ſacred to eaſy mirth and ſocial chearfulneſs: Conform to this cuſtom, and furniſh your

quota

quota of good humour; but be not induced by example to the frequent exceſs of gluttony or intemperance; the former inevitably produces dulneſs, the latter madneſs.

Obſerve the *a propos* in every thing you ſay or do. In converſing with thoſe who are much your ſuperiors, however eaſy and familiar you may and ought to be with them, preſerve the reſpect that is due to them. Converſe with your equals with an eaſy familiarity, and at the ſame time great civility and decency. But too much familiarity, according to the old ſaying, often breeds contempt, and ſometimes quarrels. I know nothing more difficult in common behaviour than to

ſix due bounds to familiarity; too little implies an unſociable formality, too much deſtroys friendly and ſocial intercourſe. The beſt rule I can give you to manage familiarity is, never to be more familiar with any body than you would be willing, and even wiſh that he ſhould be with you. On the other hand, avoid that uncomfortable reſerve and coldneſs which is generally the ſhield of cunning, or the protection of dulneſs. The Italian maxim is a wiſe one, *il volto ſciolto, i penſieri ſtretti*; that is, let your countenance be open and your thoughts cloſe. To your inferiors you ſhould uſe an hearty benevolence in your words and actions, inſtead of a refined politeneſs, which would

would be apt to make them ſuſpect that you rather laughed at them: For example, your civility to a mere country gentleman muſt be in a very different way to what you would uſe to a man of the world; your reception of him ſhould ſeem hearty, and rather coarſe, to relieve him from the embarraſſment of his own *mauvaiſe honte*. Have attention even in the company of fools; for though they are fools, they may, perhaps, drop, or repeat ſomething worth your knowing, and which you may profit by. Never talk your beſt in the company of fools; for they would not underſtand you, and would perhaps ſuſpect that you jeered them, as they commonly call it; but talk only the plaineſt com-

common ſenſe to them, and very gravely, for there is no jeſting nor *badinage* with them. Upon the whole, with attention, and *les attentions*, you will be ſure to pleaſe; without them, you will be ſure to offend.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

MY DEAR LITTLE BOY, *Bath.*

CAREFULLY avoid all affectation either of body or of mind. It is a very true and a very trite obſervation, that no man is ridiculous for being what he really is, but for affecting to be what he is not. No man is aukward by nature, but by affecting to be genteel. I have known many a man of common ſenſe paſs generally for a fool, becauſe he affected a degree of wit that God had denied him. A ploughman is by no means aukward in the exerciſe of his trade, but would be

be exceedingly ridiculous, if he attempted the air and graces of a man of faſhion. You learned to dance; but it was not for the ſake of dancing; it was to bring your air and motions back to what they would naturally have been if they had had fair play, and had not been warped in youth by bad examples and aukward imitations of other boys.

Nature may be cultivated and improved both as to the body and the mind; but it is not to be extinguiſhed by art; and all endeavours of that kind are abſurd, and an inexpreſſible fund for ridicule. Your body and mind muſt be at eaſe to be agreeable; but affectation is a particular re-

reſtraint, under which no man can be genteel in his carriage or pleaſing in his converſation. Do you think your motions would be eaſy or graceful, if you wore the cloaths of another much ſlenderer or taller than yourſelf? Certainly not; it is the ſame thing with the mind, if you affect a character that does not fit you and that nature never intended for you. But do not miſtake, and think that it follows from hence that you ſhould exhibit your whole character to the public, becauſe it is your natural one. No, many things muſt be ſuppreſſed and many things concealed in the beſt character: Never force nature; but it is by no means neceſſary to ſhew it all.

Diſcretion muſt come to your aſſiſtance, that ſure and ſafe guide through life; diſcretion, that neceſſary companion to reaſon, and the uſeful *guarde feu*, if I may uſe the expreſſion, to wit and imagination. Diſcretion points out the *a propos*, the *decorum*, the *ne quid nimis*, and will carry a man with moderate parts further than the moſt ſhining parts would without it. It is another word for judgment, though not quite ſynonymous to it. Judgment is not upon all occaſions required, but diſcretion always is. Never affect nor aſſume a particular character; for it will never fit you, but will probably give you a ridicule; leave it to your conduct, your virtues,

tues, your morals, and your manners, to give you one. Diſcretion will teach you to have particular attention to your *mæurs*, which we have no one word in our language to expreſs exactly. *Morals* are too much, *manners* too little. Decency comes the neareſt to it, though rather ſhort of it; Cicero's word *decorum* is properly the thing; and I ſee no reaſon why that expreſſive word ſhould not be adopted and naturalized in our language: I have never ſcrupled uſing it in that ſenſe.

A propos of words. Study your own language more carefully than moſt people do; get a habit of ſpeaking it

with propriety and elegance; for nothing is more diſagreeable than to hear a gentleman talk the barbariſms, the ſoliciſms, and the vulgariſms of porters. Avoid, on the other hand, a ſtiff and formal accuracy, eſpecially what the women call hard words, when plain ones as expreſſive are at hand. The French make it their ſtudy *bien narrer*, but are apt *narrer trop*, and with too affected an elegancy.

The three commoneſt topics of diſcourſe are religion, politics, and news. All people think they underſtand the two firſt perfectly, though they never ſtudied either; and are therefore very apt to talk both dogmatically

cally and ignorantly, conſequently with warmth: But religion is by no means a proper ſubject of converſation in a mixed company; it ſhould only be of treated among a very few people of learning, for mutual inſtruction. It is too awful and reſpectable a ſubject to become a familiar one. Therefore never mingle yourſelf in it any further, than to expreſs an univerſal toleration of all errors in it conſcientiouſly entertained; for, every man has as a good right to think as he does, as you have to think as you do; nay, in truth, he cannot help it.

As for politics, they are ſtill more uni-

univerſally underſtood; and as every one thinks his private intereſt more or leſs concerned in them, nobody heſitates to pronounce deciſively upon them, not even the ladies, the copiouſneſs of whoſe eloquence is more to be admired than the concluſiveneſs of their logic. It will be impoſſible for you to avoid engaging in theſe converſations, for there are hardly any others; but take care to do it coolly, and with great good humour; and whenever you find that the company begin to be heated, and noiſy for the good of their country, be only a patient hearer, unleſs you can interpoſe by ſome agreeable *badinage*, and reſtore good humour to the company.

And

And here I cannot help obſerving to you, that nothing is more uſeful either to put off or to parry diſagreeable and puzzling affairs, than a good humoured and genteel *badinage:* I have found it ſo by long experience. But this *badinage* muſt not be carried to *mauvais plaiſanterie*; it muſt be light, without being ſententious: and in ſhort *have that je ne ſçai quoi* which every body feels, and nobody deſcribes.

I ſhall now for a time ſuſpend the courſe of theſe letters; but as the ſubject is inexhauſtible, I ſhall occaſionally reſume it: In the mean time, believe, that a man, who does not generally pleaſe is nobody; and that

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a conſtant endeavour to pleaſe, will infallibly pleaſe to a certain degree at leaſt.

FINIS.

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Vide Critical Review publiſhed the firſt of January 1783, See alſo Mr. Maty's Review for laſt month.